

IMPORTANT CONCEPTS IN CHAPTER 10



- Policy claims, which are a subset of the larger category of claims of evaluation, call for some kind of explicit action.
- A simple policy proposition asks debaters to support a policy proposal. It asserts that a new policy is better than the current policy.
- A comparative policy proposition asks debaters to compare two policies. It asserts that one policy is better than another policy.
- A common way to support a simple policy proposition is to construct a need-plan-benefits case.
- To argue against a simple policy proposition, debaters can choose from among these options: defending the status quo, defending a policy other than the status quo, and attacking the affirmative's plan.
- A common way to support a comparative policy proposition is to construct a comparative advantages case.
- To argue against a comparative policy proposition, debaters should attack the affirmative advantages as well as construct advantages supporting the negative policy.

NOTES

1. We should distinguish debate on policy claims from American policy debate (policy debate, for short). American policy debate is a specific debate format used in many schools and universities of the United States. Apart from its many intricacies, some basic ideas of American policy debate include the use of one proposition for the whole year, heavy reliance on evidence in a debate, a rapid rate of speaking, and, ultimately, propositions that deal with certain plans of action or policies. The Karl Popper format, which is described in Chapter 7, does not specify the types of claims or resolutions debated. In fact, we have noted that Karl Popper debate is applicable to all kinds of debate resolutions. Thus, policy claims can be debated in Karl Popper format without changing its requirements and values.

2. We stress that debaters may not only want to learn this need-plan-benefit strategy but may also want to learn when and under what circumstances amending these strategies is appropriate. In no case should these guidelines be treated as the checklist for debaters or judges. Each debate might require a team to use a different approach, one that the team considers the most effective and most suitable for the topic.

3. The other popular method is known as the "comparative advantages" method. It will be used to explain how to construct a case for a comparative policy proposition. The comparative advantage method also is a typical way to construct a case for a simple policy proposition.

4. Technically, the negative ought to establish that the net benefits of the counterplan alone are greater than the net benefits of the counterplan plus the affirmative plan. However, as this chapter seeks only a brief and simple explanation of counterplans, we will not attempt this more technical explanation.

5. This section of the chapter borrows heavily from Robert Trapp and Christine Hanson, "Debating about Comparative Propositions of Policy," *Idebate* (May, 2004), 20–27.

6. This resolution was selected for debate in the IDEA Summer Forums in Estonia (2004) and Macedonia (2005).